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SHEN YUN
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HUGO CHAVEZ DIES AT 58 {page 10}

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Wednesday, March 6, 2013

Mysterious drone buzzes jet pilot near JFK Airport



- FBI is investigating the unmanned craft that pilot saw as he neared city
- The black drone came within just a few hundred feet of the plane {page 02}

DANIELLE TCHOLAKIAN/METRO

Record. Homeless

► People line up for a meal outside the Bowery Mission. A new report shows that more than 50,000 homeless live in city shelters. {page 02}

PLUS

STOP SNOOZING ON THE TRAIN! {page 20}

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Record number of homeless are sleeping in NYC shelters

► More than 50,000 homeless are sleeping in shelters every night, according to a new report ► Homeless Coalition blames the mayor for eliminating assistance programs ► Department of Homeless Services calls that accusation 'misleading'



SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

► The Coalition of the Homeless report says that 50,000 use city shelters on an average night.

In the news

NYC spends most time commuting

New census data shows what Metro readers doubtlessly already know: The New York metro sees more commuting than anywhere else in the country. More people commute to work in Manhattan than to any county in the country. On top of that, more commuters — a record 400,000 — travel from New Jersey to New York than between any other states in the country.

► METRO/DT

In the news



Nor'easter arrives today

NEW YORK. Prepare for snow — a nor'easter is coming our way today. The National Weather Service projects that a winter storm will arrive in the city today and last until tomorrow. The NWS projects snow in the afternoon. Snowfall is expected to continue into tomorrow as wind gusts increase. A chance of snow continues through Tuesday night, according to the predictions.

► METRO/AB

Modern life

Patrick Markee, the policy analyst responsible for the report, said that homelessness as we know it — large numbers of homeless, mostly single men, on the streets and in transportation terminals — emerged in the early 1980s, as a result of the economic recession and Reagan cutbacks to federal housing programs.

not have "risen by a staggering 61 percent and the number of homeless families [by] 73 percent."

"Mayor Bloomberg's elimination of all affordable housing assistance for homeless families is a major factor behind the historic homelessness crisis," the report says. "Previous New York City mayors, from Ed Koch to David Dinkins to Rudy Giuliani, targeted federal and city housing resources to help homeless families relocate from shelters to stable,

By the numbers

The report notes that these numbers do not include "the thousands of New Yorkers displaced by Hurricane Sandy, many of whom comprise extremely low-income households."

1.5K

► The city testified last week that around 1,500

families are still in hotels, YMCAs, and shelters, but Patrick Markee at the Coalition said there are "obviously many more still doubled up with friends or family."

25%

► According to Commissioner Diamond, 25 percent less people entered the shelter system in February 2013 than did in 2011.

permanent housing."

Department of Homeless Services Commissioner Seth Diamond called that accusation "misleading." He noted that permanent housing funding, known as Section 8, was not cut by the mayor, but has been crippled by an absence of financial support from the federal government.

"You can't have a homeless housing program that is based on something that doesn't exist," Diamond said. "It's unfair to people

in the shelter system to tell them this is the answer when it's not the reality."

A DHS spokesperson added, "We are not facing the same economy that the previous three mayors faced, we are not facing the same federal resources that the previous three mayors faced. The Coalition needs to realize that it is no longer 1970; we are in a different time that requires different solutions."



Danielle Tcholakian
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Pilot spots mystery drone near JFK airport



GETTY IMAGES

► A drone was spotted flying near Kennedy Airport.

What are some drone uses?

► The FAA has authorized use of unmanned aircrafts for missions like

firefighting, disaster relief, and search and rescue.

► Other uses may include military training, the FAA spokesman said, or state universities conducting research.

within just 200 feet of the landing plane.

Agents want to know who operated the aircraft, which they described as black and about 3 feet wide with four propellers.

"The FBI is asking anyone with information about the unmanned aircraft or the operator to contact us," Giacalone said. "Our paramount concern is the safety of aircraft passengers and crew."

The Federal Aviation Administration is investigating the report.

The pilot did not need to take evasive action, according to the FAA, and landed safely.

An FAA spokesman told Metro that law enforcement and public agencies need a permit from the FAA to fly an unmanned aircraft like a drone.

But private citizens can operate one as long as they stay under 400 feet and three miles away from an airport. If they go closer, they need to warn the airport control tower, he said.

The FAA is crafting updated rules for unmanned aircraft to be finished this year, the spokesman said.

Anyone with information about the drone can call 212-384-1000.

► ALISON BOWEN

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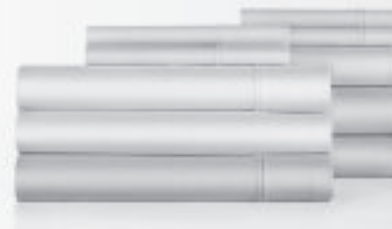
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In the news

Robber going after livery cab drivers

Cops are looking for a man they say robbed two livery cabbies in the Bronx at gunpoint recently. According to the police, on Feb. 28 around 12:30 a.m., a man entered a livery cab and demanded the cabbie's cell phone and money, showing a gun. He also told him to leave the car. The cabbie, 45, was not injured, but the suspect left with his cell phone and cash and also stole the car. On Monday shortly before 11 p.m., around Olmstead Avenue, the same suspect entered a livery cab, threatened the cabbie with a gun and stole his cash and the

car. The victim, 45, was not injured. The suspect is described as male, Hispanic, 50 to 55 and 5-foot-10. He was wearing a green Army baseball cap and green Army shirt, cops said. Anyone with info should call 800-577-TIPS.

● ALISON BOWEN

City breaks ground for first homes by water post-Sandy

The city broke ground yesterday on the first residential buildings on the waterfront to be built since Hurricane Sandy. Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced that 925 units in the two buildings will be built in the Hunter's Point South development on the Queens waterfront. The development will include retail space, a 5-acre waterfront park and a school. Officials said the building will include storm-protection measures and emergency generators on the roof.

● METRO/AB



► The blasting is finally done for the 72nd Street stop of the new Second Avenue subway line.

Second Avenue subway station blasting finished

The MTA has announced that blasting is complete for the 72nd Street station of the Second Avenue subway line.

The final blast, finishing the work clearing space for a future elevator entrance, occurred at approximately 4:30 p.m. on Feb. 28, the MTA said.

Drilling and blasting for the 72nd Street station began on Jan. 18, 2011.

Workers removed a to-

\$4B

The cost to construct the subway line, according to MTA estimates

tal of 183,000 cubic yards of rock, which the MTA said is the equivalent to the volume covered by 500 city avenue blocks 10 feet high, or more than

half the Empire State Building.

The Second Avenue subway line will extend the Q line, and it is the largest expansion of the subway system in generations. The subway line will have new stations at 72nd Street, 86th Street and 96th Street, and is set to open in December 2016.

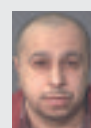


Danielle Tcholakian
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News in brief

Fatal car crash suspect to turn himself in

Julio Acevedo, the suspect in this past weekend's Williamsburg hit-



and-run that resulted in the death of a pregnant woman, her husband and their baby

boy, told the New York Daily News that he is ready to turn himself in, the News reports.

Police have said Acevedo is the driver of the vehicle that hit Nachman and Raizy Glauber's taxi. Witnesses saw the driver jump out of his car and run away. The phone call was set up by a man Acevedo was in jail with. Acevedo was imprisoned in 1987 on a manslaughter conviction. Acevedo told the News his "heart goes out to" the couple, and said he was unaware they had died until he saw it on the news.

● METRO/DT

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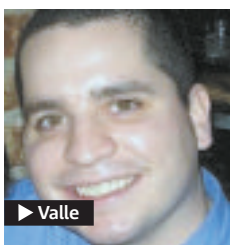
Defense presents its opening argument in 'Cannibal Cop' case

For more than a week, jurors in the federal kidnapping conspiracy trial of the so-called "cannibal cop" Gilberto Valle have been exposed to talk, imagery and video detailing brutality against women.

Yesterday defense attorneys began presenting their case, but jurors will not get a chance to hear from Valle himself, according to Stephanie Cirkovich, spokeswoman for the District Court in Manhattan.

"I just learned that defendant Valle is not testifying," Cirkovich said.

The grim-faced panel — six men and six women — have listened intently as witnesses read excerpts aloud from dozens of Web chats and e-mails in which Valle talked with others in graphic, often gleeful de-



► Valle

Net stalking

► Assistant U.S. Attorney Randall Jackson has charged that after months of online role-play last year, Valle began to act on his fantasies when he met one of his online "targets" for brunch and improperly accessed a law enforcement database to get personal information on another.

tail about raping, murdering, cooking and eating women.

Those women included his own now-estranged wife, Kathleen Mangan-Valle, whose tearful testimony against him last week was the emotional crescendo of the prosecution's case.

On Monday, before resting their case, prosecutors played a video allegedly found on Valle's computer in which a chained woman shrieks as she appears to be burning alive.

An FBI computer forensics expert testified that the video appears to be staged using an actress.

On Tuesday morning, jurors heard from a Russian man who runs the fantasy role-play website where Valle's plots were hatched. **REUTERS**

Carousel. Fun



► A boy enjoys a ride on Jane's Carousel over the weekend in Brooklyn Bridge Park.

PAUL LACHENAUER/METRO

Jane's Carousel gallops back from Sandy

Children and adults enjoyed taking turns on Jane's Carousel in Brooklyn Bridge Park over the weekend. The 90-year-old carousel faced damage from superstorm Sandy but is now back open to the public. **METRO**

News in brief

Queens students injured by pepper spray

More than a dozen students were injured on Monday in Queens after a student sprayed pepper

16

Students reported being hurt

spray in the cafeteria. According to the Department of Education, a

student at Queens Collegiate High School in Jamaica reportedly released the pepper spray in the morning at 8, and 16 students reported tightness in their chests or burning eyes. Disciplinary action is pending against the student. **ALISON BOWEN**

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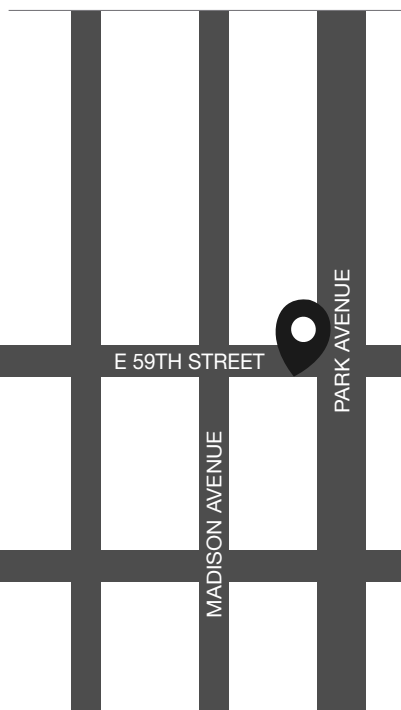
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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2013

Woman assaults cabby in the Bronx



► This photo shows the woman who may have robbed a livery cab driver over the weekend.

Police are looking for a woman who threatened, assaulted and robbed a livery cab driver in the Bronx on Sunday night.

The suspect got into the cab at 145th Street and Third Avenue at around 11 p.m. The cab driver, 28, took the suspect to 10 Richman Plaza in the Morris Heights neighborhood of the Bronx. The woman then

Tip line

► Anyone with information about this assault and robbery should call Crime Stoppers at 800-577-TIPS.

threatened the driver, assaulted him and fled with an unknown amount of money. ● **LAURA SHIN**

In the news



► The hot air balloon prepares for takeoff.

Hot air balloon floats over Central Parks

A hot air balloon flew over Central Park yesterday morning as part of a promotion for the upcoming film "Oz The Great and Powerful." The balloon traveled up and over the park. ● **METRO**

Sequester cuts could cost city \$800 million

The federal budget cuts that started taking effect last week will hit the city

The cuts

Local cuts could break down as follows:

- **\$500 million**
Hit to Hurricane Sandy aid
- **\$75 million**
Less for Medicaid funding for city hospitals
- **\$60 million**
In lost funding for city housing
- **\$200 million**
In cuts spread among other city agencies

for \$800 million, the city's budget director said at a council hearing on Monday.

Budget Director Mark Page said a revenue gap for the city is likely because the sequester cuts, an automatic \$85 billion reduction in federal spending, were not taken into account in the mayor's proposed budget for 2013-14, the Daily News reports.

If lawmakers in Washington reach a deal to reduce the nationwide cuts, the impact on the city could be minimized, Page said. ● **LAURA SHIN**

Macy's takes Martha Stewart to court over JC Penney line deal

Martha Stewart was questioned in a New York state court yesterday over the terms of her contract with Macy's, which the retailer says she broke when she tried to sell cookware and other goods at rival JC Penney stores.

Macy's lawyer Theodore Grossman asked the domestic diva what she understood to be the essence of the contract. "The essence was to create product for Macy's under the Martha Stewart collection name," Stewart responded. "That was the essence of the contract."

Grossman then played a clip from a deposition taken last year in which Stewart was asked whether the essence was that her products would not compete at stores that were downmarket from Macy's. "That was my understanding," she said on that occasion.

The trial is over claims by Macy's that Martha



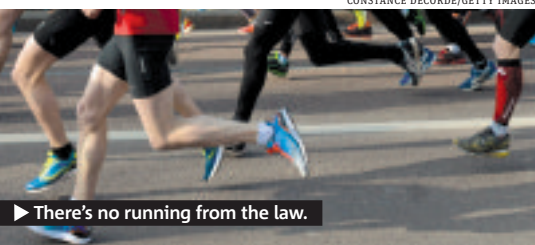
► Stewart's looking courthouse chic.

"The essence was to create product for Macy's under the Martha Stewart collection name."

GROSSMAN

Stewart Living's agreement to sell certain products in JC Penney stores violated an existing contract between MSLO and Macy's. The question is central for all three companies operating in an environment of struggling retail. **REUTERS**

NYC track team teens charged in school hazing



CONSTANCE DECORDE/GETTY IMAGES

► There's no running from the law.

Three members of a track team at a prestigious New York City public school have been charged with hazing a freshman teammate by molesting him over a span of three months, prosecutors said yesterday.

Charged as adults, Thomas Brady, 16, Boubacar Diallo, 16, and Pier Berkman, 17, all pleaded not guilty at their arraignment last week on multiple counts of assault, hazing, harass-

ment and forcible touching of the freshman at the Bronx High School of Science.

The freshman accuses the defendants of forcibly groping and fingering his nipples, anus and penis through his clothes while taunting him on multiple occasions, the complaint said.

The city's Department of Education said the track team events had been suspended pending an investigation. **REUTERS**

News in brief



Kissinger in hospital after fall in home

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was admitted to a New York hospital on Tuesday after a fall at his home and was expected to be released later in the day, New York-Presbyterian /Weill Cornell Medical Center said in a statement.

A hospital spokeswoman declined to give more details.

Kissinger, 89, has remained a leading voice on U.S. foreign policy since serving Republican Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford in the 1970s. **REUTERS**



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In the news

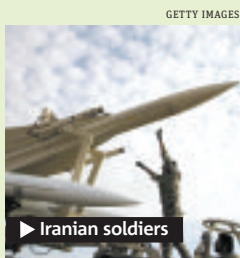
Clock running out on Iran pressures

WASHINGTON. Vice President Joe Biden said there remains "time and space" for diplomacy aimed at averting military action to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons power.

Still, the pressure on President Barack Obama's administration to move toward military action is growing as Iran advances its uranium enrichment capabilities, and lawmakers, Israel and Persian Gulf allies press for results.

Yesterday, Secretary of State John Kerry said negotiating time is "finite."

"The clock is ticking and the president has made that clear," Kerry said in an interview with Andrea Mitchell of NBC News. "The president's policy is that Iran will not get a nuclear weapon." Iran is using negotiations



▶ Iranian soldiers

to "buy time" to pursue a nuclear weapons program, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's annual conference in Washington. Although Iran's uranium enrichment activities have yet to cross Israel's "red line," the Islamic Republic is "getting closer" to the point where it would be capable of quickly producing a nuclear weapon, he said.

Sen. John McCain, an Arizona Republican, told the group, a major pro-Israel lobby, that diplomatic efforts with Iran "have failed, and it is very clear that they are on the path of having a nuclear weapon." **BLOOMBERG**

Kerry says US wants to see N. Korea take steps for peace

Secretary of State John Kerry said yesterday that Washington hoped North Korea would engage in negotiations to resolve world concerns instead of threatening to scrap a 50-year-old truce with the South.

Pyongyang threatened to scrap the agreement that ended a 1950-53 civil war and sever a military "hot line" with the United States if South Korea and Washington pressed on with two-month-long war games.

"Rather than threaten to abrogate, the world would be better served if [North Korea] would engage in legitimate dialogue," Kerry said yesterday during a joint news conference with his Qatari counterpart, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani. "Our preference is not to brandish threats, but for peaceful negotiations," he added.

North Korea's threat



▶ A South Korean policeman holds a North Korean prisoner of war at gunpoint as he marches him to a stockade during the Korean War in 1953.

Still at war

▶ The Koreans remain technically at war since the 1950-53 armed conflict ended in an armistice rather than a peace treaty.

was a notable sharpening in the country's often bellicose rhetoric and followed word that the United States and China had struck a tentative deal on a draft U.N. sanctions resolution that would punish North Korea for its third nuclear test. **REUTERS**

Kerry dismisses Rodman's visit to Korea

Secretary of State John Kerry yesterday brushed



off a visit to North Korea by former basketball great Dennis Rodman, suggesting

the sportsman was no diplomat. Rodman emerged from four days in North Korea on Friday, calling the leader of the reclusive country, Kim Jong-un, "an awesome kid."

The five-time NBA champion known for his tattoos, body piercings and flamboyance was there to film a sports documentary and watched a basketball game alongside Kim. **REUTERS**

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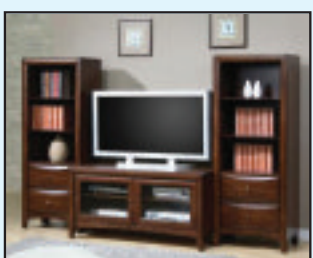
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Hugo Chavez dead at 58

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has died after a two-year battle with cancer, ending the socialist leader's 14-year rule of the South American country, Vice President Nicolas Maduro said in a televised speech yesterday. The flamboyant 58-year-old leader had undergone four operations in Cuba for a cancer that was first detected in his pelvic region in mid-2011. His last surgery was on Dec. 11, and he had not been seen in public since. Chavez easily won a new six-year term at an election in October and his death will devastate millions of supporters who adored his charismatic style, anti-U.S. rhetoric and oil-financed policies that brought subsidized food and free health clinics.

Detractors, however, saw his one-man style, gleeful nationalizations and often harsh treatment of opponents as traits of an egotistical dictator who wasted a historic bonanza of oil revenues. **REUTERS**



"It's a moment of deep pain."

MADURO, ACCOMPANIED BY SENIOR MINISTERS, SAID, HIS VOICE CHOKING

► Chavez was beloved by millions in Venezuela, but detractors viewed him as an egotistical dictator.

Chavez: A history of tension with the US

Hugo Chavez's strained relationship with the U.S. government may best be exemplified by his opening line in a speech to the United Nations in 2006.

"Yesterday the devil was here. It smells of sulfur still," Chavez said, directly attacking then-U.S. President George W. Bush, who had been on the same stage the day before.

That discord continued as recently as yesterday, when Venezuelan authorities expelled two U.S. troops who allegedly participated in acts of conspiracy against the government. Last month, the newly appointed U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry mentioned that one of his objectives is to improve relations with Venezuela.

On multiple occasions over the years, Chavez spoke against the U.S. government. He associated with countries hostile to



the United States, such as Cuba and Iran, among others. Chavez said on more than one occasion that he had evidence that the United States had developed a plan to invade Venezuela. He also accused the U.S. of collaborating with the failed coup of 2002 and even spoke of a plot to assassinate him. At one point, he hinted that the U.S. may have been involved in infecting leaders of leftist governments with different types of cancer.

At all times, the United States denied the accusations of Chavez and his government.

Despite these tensions,

the Venezuelan government has never stopped selling oil to the United States, even partnering with former Congressman Joe Kennedy to deliver free fuel to hundreds of thousands of American households in need.

Big names in Hollywood also showed sympathy for Chavez. Filmmaker Oliver Stone portrayed him in the documentary "South of the Border" in 2009. Since then, he worked closely with the Venezuelan leader and recently said on national television that Chavez did for Venezuela what Barack Obama was doing for the United States to improve the condition of life of their constituents. Actor Sean Penn was also a Chavez supporter, once saying that he "is a fascinating man and did great things for 80 percent of the people of Venezuela."

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US Web shoppers shrug over same-day delivery

Same-day delivery, one of the hottest e-commerce trends, is too expensive for most U.S. consumers, raising the risk that this could become another online shopping fad that goes cold, according to a survey released yesterday.

The Boston Consulting Group recently asked 1,500 U.S. consumers what would get them to shop more online, and only 9 percent cited same-day delivery. Almost three-quarters of respondents said free delivery would do the trick, while half of those surveyed said lower prices. Consumers said they would pay \$7.50, on average, to get a \$50 online purchase on the same day. **REUTERS**



24

THE DAY'S NEWS AT A GLANCE

Meditation? There's an app for that

A new smartphone app aims to ease stress and guide users through meditation by monitoring brain waves that change as people become more relaxed. Transcend, made by the Canadian company Personal Neuro Devices, links the phone to a separately sold headset that records electrical activity along the forehead. The user picks the duration of the meditation and can also listen to a guided audio meditation. **REUTERS**

German flight to host comet tourists

A German travel agency is selling tickets for a flight to give 88 astronomy buffs a close-up view of one of two rare comets expected to pass Earth this year. Eclipse Travel, based in Bonn, has joined charter agency Air Partner and airline Air Berlin to organize flight AB1000 on March 16 as comet Pan-STARRS pass-



es through the solar system, 100 million miles from Earth. The last comet to dazzle Earth's night-time skies was Comet Hale-Bopp, which visited in 1997. **REUTERS**

Bolshoi Ballet dancer detained in acid attack

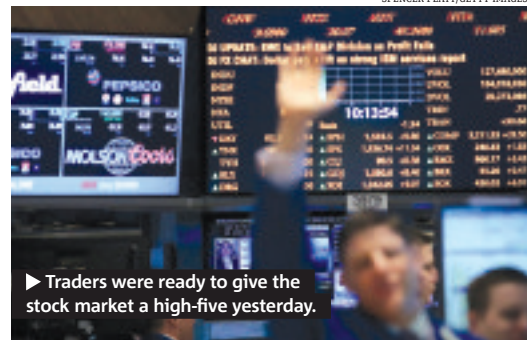
Russian police detained one of the Bolshoi Ballet's top dancers yesterday over an acid attack that nearly blinded the troupe's artistic director and exposed



The victim, Sergei Filin

fierce backstage rivalries at the famed theater. Russia's Interior Ministry said in a statement that Pavel Dmitrichenko, a Bolshoi soloist who is to dance in "Sleeping Beauty" this month, is suspected of plotting the attack that left Sergei Filin, 42, with severe burns after a masked assailant threw a jar of acid in his face. Police also said they detained a man suspected of carrying out the attack and another thought to have driven to the crime scene. **REUTERS**

Optimism lifts Dow to new high



The Dow Jones Industrial Average surged to a record high yesterday, breaking through levels last seen in 2007 as equities jumped 1 percent in a broad rally.

Investors poured money into blue-chip stocks in expectation of more gains amid signs of a strengthening U.S. economy. The Dow has gained nearly 9 percent so far this year, ahead of the S&P 500 and Nasdaq Composite Index.

418

Stocks hit new yearly highs on NYSE. Ten of the Dow's 30 component stocks also reached new 52-week highs.

Analysts said the advance was linked less to one specific catalyst and more to the same factors that have been driving this year's rally. **REUTERS**

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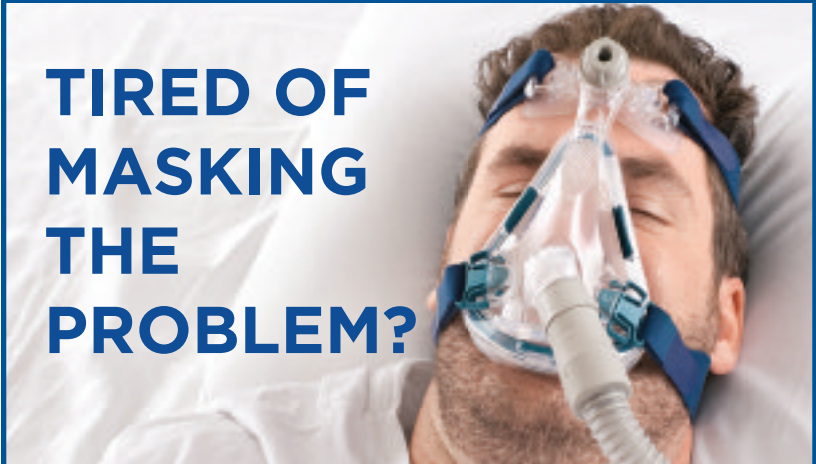
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THE WORD



Dorothy Robinson's take on the world of gossip [@dorothyatmetro](#) dorothy.robinson@metro.us

What is going on with Kim Kardashian's maternity clothing?

As a woman who has grown a baby in her uterus, I know how hard it is to find good maternity clothing. So I can relate to **Kim Kardashian's** problem finding a flattering pregnancy wardrobe. However, I'm not sure why she's continuing to dress like she isn't pregnant. My theory? Her fashion plate boyfriend, **Kanye West**, has something to do with it. So I hope he looks at her recent attempts and is like, "Yo, honey. Here are some stretch pants from Gap and a nice wrap dress. We can pick up this 'haute couture' stuff up later."

Case in point: As soon as Kardashian started to show, she decided to don this mesh-leather-feather-pants ensemble which made her resemble a motorcyclist-riding ostrich.



► Leave the high fashion at home, Kim. Take a page from Kate's book and go with simple, bump-flattering choices.



Then, on Saturday, she wore this ill-fitting white ensemble in Beverly Hills, which is made for a much taller, much less knocked-up person.

I'm not saying you can't look nice while pregnant (look at **Kate Middleton**, who is sticking to basic, bump-flattering outfits, like this belted jacket she wore yesterday in Grimsby, England).

I'm just saying that you should respect the bump and your growing body — instead of squeezing into high fashion.

Swift: Back it up, people

Taylor Swift has some news for everyone keeping track of her love life. "If you want some big revelation, since 2010 I have dated exactly two people," she tells *Vanity Fair*, referring to high schooler **Conor Kennedy** and One Direction member **Harry Styles**. "The fact that there are slide-shows of a dozen guys that I either hugged on a red carpet or met for lunch or wrote a song with, it's just kind of ridiculous." But she doesn't let all the talk get to her. "If there's a pregnancy rumor, people will find out it's not true when you wind up not pregnant," she says. "And if there's a house rumor, they'll find out it's not true when you are actively not ever spotted at that house."



Hilaria Baldwin won't be going for Massimo

Alec Baldwin's new wife, **Hilaria Baldwin**, isn't on her husband's side with a certain potential baby names. "[Alec] had the idea for Massimo the other day," Hilaria tells **Rachael Ray** during a visit to her television show. "It's a lovely name, I just don't know. That's a very big name for a little baby."

Sam Mendes — which ended in 2010 — and her December wedding with **Ned Rocknroll** has been a great period of self-discovery. "I've really learned a great deal about myself, in the last four years in particular," she tells *Harper's Bazaar* UK. "I think I can see more clearly now — about how the pattern of past experiences has shaped who I am, and the characters I have played — and I'm grateful for that."

ing acts to go onstage at 9:35, not 8:30, but because of some technical issues I got on at 10:10, so I was 40 minutes late to [the] stage. There is no excuse for that and I apologize for anyone we upset," he tweeted.

Winslet is on a path of 'self-discovery'

Kate Winslet says the period between her marriage to

Talking points

Bieber gets booed in London

Justin Bieber's troublesome stay in London continued this week when he got a late start at his first show at the O2 Arena, courting boos from an angry, impatient audience. "Last night I was scheduled after three open-

The feed ...

► Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

Today, Sara Silverman is having trouble sleeping, Rosie O'Donnell is filming a guest appearance and Paula Abdul is getting nosy about your resolutions.

@SarahKSilverman BACKFIRE: This AdvilPM is giving me the dancing bug

@Rosie On my way to film SMASH - love that show so much ... I am playing me - luckily I have done a lot of research ;)

@PaulaAbdul So how did you spend the 1st weekend in March? Are you still on track with those #goals you set on Jan 1st?

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Life constructed 'In Pieces'

► A collaboration between photographer Dean West and Lego artist Nathan Sawaya showcases the construction of identity and plasticity of lives

The artist Nathan Sawaya is best known as the Lego guy. Out of the plastic, interlocking bricks one may have toyed around with as a child, he's recreated the Brooklyn Bridge, the raising of the American flag at Iwo Jima and the human body, as seen in poses both realistic and expressionistic. In his latest exhibit — one of his four presently happening around the world — one might not immediately catch his work.

In "In Pieces," running through March 17 in the Openhouse space in NoLita thanks to Miami's Avant Gallery, is the result of collaboration between Sawaya and the

photographer Dean West. West shoots photorealistic tableaux of people looking faintly melancholic, or at least ambiguously empty, against mostly vacant backdrops: a desert motel, a rain-swept city street, a public swimming pool. Look closer and not all the objects are genuine: an umbrella, a dog, a row of train tracks, even an unraveling, wind-blown red dress are each Sawaya's Lego creations.

"Our initial idea was to look at how society and individuals construct beauty," explains Sawaya. "That changed more into the construction of identity." West had contacted



► "Bus," a collaboration between photographer Dean West and Lego artist Nathan Sawaya, is on exhibit at the Openhouse space in NoLita by way of the Avant Gallery.

DEAN WEST AND NATHAN SAWAYA

Sawaya three years ago with the idea of working together. "We wanted the subjects in the images to look empty, to have this aloofness. We wanted them to be at this place in their lives where they're maybe on the verge of being lost." The presence of Legos adds an unusual element. "It's commenting

on the construction of identity, but it's also commentary on the plasticity of these people's lives."

"In Pieces" is set up so that one can dote over both the photos and the Lego sculptures themselves. A pair of blue flip flops or even the aforementioned dress — dangling from strings — are

placed nearby their appropriate photos, allowing one to examine Sawaya's handiwork up close. "You almost need the actual Lego sculptures there," he says, "to almost justify the experience, that they're not just a trick to the eye."

Working with someone else for a change proved a challenge but a rewarding one, admits Sawaya, who recently released a second book of his work, "The Art of Nathan Sawaya." It's also a way to widen the art world audience. "What I've found at my exhibitions is a broad audience of families attending, because of the Lego. They can

If you go

'In Pieces'
Openhouse Gallery
201 Mulberry St.
www.inpiecescollection.com

A dog made of Legos, as seen in the photograph "Bus."

relate to it. You have kids coming to a contemporary art museum who've never been to one in their lives. It's surreal how this has opened the art world up to families."

There's been an unexpected result of his work: a lot of parents whose children have gone off to college have called him up and asked to donate piles of old Legos. "I'd much rather see Lego bricks recycled as art, rather than tossed in a landfill," he says. "It's all about being on some level environmentally conscious."

Matt Prigge
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MATTHEW MURPHY



TV watch list

'The Rachel Zoe Project'

REALITY. Can Zoe prove herself as a heavy hitter at Fashion Week after a gossip columnist's dismissal? We doubt that her entertainment empire really depends on it. **Season**



► The star of "The Rachel Zoe Project," right, is trying to be a Fashion Week heavy hitter.

premiere, 9 p.m., Bravo

'Kroll Show'

COMEDY. The masterminds who helm this sketch show read like a "who's who" of recent alternative comedy. **Season finale, 10:30 p.m., Comedy Central**

'Shift Happens! Live an Inspired Life with Dr. Robert Holden'

SPECIAL. Learn how to live a successful, happy life in

this 90-minute program. If the advice is sound and you miss out, expect egg on your face. **8 p.m., PBS**

'Dukes of Melrose'

REALITY. Travel the world with elite boutiques in search of the most precious fashion artifacts. **Series premiere, 10:30 p.m., Bravo**

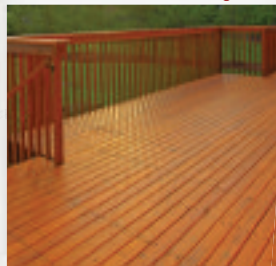
● NATALIE SHURE

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Beautiful and black ... well, mostly

► Dance Theatre of Harlem is reborn ► Here's a look ahead

Virginia Johnson, a founder of Dance Theatre of Harlem in 1969, now directs the renewed, streamlined company after a nine-year hiatus. Two programs, spanning classical, neoclassical and contemporary ballets, come to Jazz at Lincoln Center next month.

The dances "make you feel what it's like to be alive in the 21st century," says Johnson, who's currently on tour with her "diverse, multicultural" 18-member troupe.

"We're particularly embracing dancers of color, but it's not about being explicitly black," she adds. "If you can cut the mustard, if you can perform ballet at the level required, you can dance."

Nine works are being prepared. They range from George Balanchine's "Agon," originally made under DTH's director emeritus, Arthur Mitchell, to Robert Garland's "Return," created in 1999 for the 30th anniversary of the company.

Johnson especially likes "Far But Close," a new nar-

If you go

► **Dance Theatre of Harlem**
April 10-14
Rose Hall
Broadway at 60th St.
\$25-\$125, 212-721-6500
www.jalc.org/events

ative that "marries choreography with a spoken text by Daniel Beaty and music by Daniel Bernard Roumain; it's almost like you're in a movie and getting the interior life of the characters through movement." Joining the dancers is a small ensemble of musicians and two actors.

Ranging from 18 to 29 years old, the dancers come from the DTH ensemble, an audition tour from last year and the company's school.

Johnson, new to running a company, declares: "If Arthur Mitchell asks you to take over his role, you have to take it very seriously. You have to say yes."



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